

Army's notification process studied

Military bungled informing family of son's death, committee says

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Army, through a series of "bungles, glitches, errors and wrong assumptions," mishandled notifying the family of a soldier killed by friendly fire in the Persian Gulf war, a congressional study released Sunday said.

The House Armed Services investigations subcommittee found no evidence of a conspiracy or cover-up in the death of Army Sgt. Douglas Lance Fielder, a 22-year-old from Tennessee killed accidentally by his comrades' guns.

The family initially was told Fielder was killed by enemy fire. "In this instance, virtually everything that could go wrong did go wrong," the panel said in its report. The subcommittee is conducting a full investigation of the military process for notifying families of casualties, and plans a complete report later in the year. Because of the large number of inquiries, the panel issued a nine-page report on the Fielder case.

Fielder was one of 35 American servicemen accidentally killed in the Gulf war by U.S. forces, the Defense Department said in August. In the Army alone, friendly fire was blamed for 21 of the 96 deaths and 65 of the 354 injuries.

The subcommittee report detailed the notification process that occurred after Fielder's death in the early morning hours of Feb. 27, 1991. His unit,

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Report House Armed Services investigation subcommittee

stranded in southern Iraq after its vehicle broke down, awaited assistance. "There were a total of 11 bungles, glitches, errors and wrong assumptions that cascaded one after another to make the handling of this particular death notification little short of an administrative disaster," the report said. In a statement, the Army, which is conducting its own review, said the

panel's report "clearly indicates there was no intention on the part of the Army to cover up a friendly fire incident or mislead the family."

"Nevertheless, a number of unfortunate human errors prevented the timely transmission of the details of Sgt. Fielder's death and this added to the family's grief," said Maj. Barbara Goodno, an Army spokesman.

USDA not careful to buy only American

Investigators find department buys some foreign foods

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Agriculture Department has a congressional mandate to buy American. But it has bought foreign foods to stock school cafeterias, soup kitchens, Indian reservations and the pantries of hunger relief agencies.

The department's own investigators say it does a poor job of making sure that the billions of taxpayer dollars spent every year on food goes back into the pockets of American farmers and food processors.

As a result, imported foods have slipped into the pipeline, according to an audit by USDA's Office of Inspec-

tor General obtained recently by The Associated Press under the Freedom of Information Act.

Foreign meat, including Canadian beef, appears to be one of the culprits, the audit said. USDA, however, has little way to assess the scope of the problem because of the shortcomings in its enforcement and regulations of contractors and their suppliers.

Congress and the department's own regulations say USDA is supposed to buy American foods and farm products when it shops for anti-hunger programs at home and abroad. It's also supposed to make sure that subsidized foreign customers are purchasing American goods.

USDA is "winking at the law," said Sen. Kent Conrad, D-N.D.

"For all we know, we're using American taxpayer dollars to pur-

chase Brazilian oranges, Argentine beef, Canadian wheat and goodness knows what else," Conrad said. "It makes no sense to use our taxpayer dollars to subsidize foreign competition."

The total value of agricultural commodities bought or guaranteed for use in domestic and export programs was \$6.9 billion in fiscal 1989, according to the August 1991 audit.

The audit did not say how much foreign food may be replacing U.S. farm products in USDA's contracts. But investigators found violations of the domestic-origin requirements by contractors for three USDA agencies that either buy food or guarantee exports.

A review of one of the agencies, the Agricultural Marketing Service, found that a large supplier included

imported beef in shipments to five AMS contractors. In turn, the contractors may have sold the USDA as much as 1 million pounds of Canadian beef.

The Agricultural Marketing Service purchases processed commodities for use in domestic programs such as the National School Lunch program, child nutrition programs, soup kitchens and Indian reservations.

Auditors also found that contractors for the agencies have failed to keep records that clearly identify the source of the commodities and products provided to USDA.

There is no suggestion in the audit that the problem could be due to the availability or price of U.S. goods. Sources said that despite shipping expenses, foreign foods can still cost far less than American made.

NU players plead innocent

From Staff Reports

One Nebraska football player and one former player were arraigned Friday in Lancaster County Court on misdemeanor charges originating from a Feb. 22 fight involving members of the UNL football and baseball teams.

Zach Wiegert, 19, a scholarship offensive tackle from Fremont, was arraigned on one assault charge and one trespassing charge, according to a Lincoln Journal-Star article Saturday.

Raymond J. Reifenrath, 23, who

completed his eligibility last season, was arraigned on two charges of assault, one charge of trespassing and one charge of vandalism, the Journal-Star reported. Reifenrath was a walk-on lineman from Dakota City.

Both Wiegert and Reifenrath pleaded innocent to all of the charges.

In the case of scholarship defensive lineman Terry Connealy, the Journal-Star reported that prosecutors had not determined what charges, if any, would be filed. Connealy, 19, was cited for trespassing.

Regents

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The regents also approved a joint program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the University of Nebraska at Omaha for a Doctor of Education in Educational Administration degree.

Massengale supported the program, which both campuses have been working on since 1989, and said it was an example of the cooperation between the two campuses.

The program will enable students to take the classes necessary for the doctoral degree at either the UNO or UNL campuses.

In other business:

• The regents approved the resolution providing for up to \$97,000 to be spent from the student fees and facilities revenue bonds on the Nebraska Union cafeteria.

Two food court outlets will be built in place of Fast Break and will be leased to private operations.

• Regents approved \$20,000 to light a UNL parking lot between 16th and 17th streets near Holdrege Street. They also approved the improvement of parking on East Campus north of the Judging Pavilion.

• The guidelines for the capital construction budget request were approved for the 1993-1995 biennium.

• Regents recognized the Outstanding Research and Creative Activity (ORCA) award winners, Stephen Behrendt, a professor of English at UNL and James Van Etten, a professor of plant pathology at UNL.

Peace treaty signed

MOSCOW (AP) — Armenian and Azerbaijani negotiators in Tehran reportedly agreed Sunday to a cease-fire in the 4-year-old conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

The tentative agreement came amid a flurry of efforts to lessen fighting in the enclave, where numerous cease-fire agreements have collapsed during a war that has claimed over 1,000 lives.

But the bloodshed continued in the disputed region, which lies inside Azerbaijan.

Armenian militants shelled scores of villages in the region Saturday night and Sunday morning, said an Azerbaijani official, Oktay Gasimov. He said at least 10 people were injured Saturday.

Ethnic clashes also flared elsewhere in the former Soviet Union.

The worst outbreak was in Moldova. Officials said Sunday at least 21 people were killed in fighting between police officers and Slav separatists in the republic's breakaway Trans-Dniester region.

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